



Neighborhood Service Organization

CENTRAL OFFICE
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A Service Provider of the Detroit-Wayne County
Community Mental Health Agency



May 22, 2007

Chad Benson
MSHDA
P.O. Box 30044
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Mr. Benson:

As you may know, the Neighborhood Service Organization (NSO) 24-Hour Walk-In Center was opened in 1975 to provide respite from the elements, and substance abuse referrals and information to homeless individuals in Detroit. The Center has a long history of service to those people most on the margins of society. It collaborates with numerous other service providers, and with the local Continuum of Care to provide services to homeless people. The 24-Hour Walk-In Center serves those who are most in need in our city: people who do not stay in traditional shelters, the "wandering mentally ill," substance abusers, and more. Consumers of services at the 24-Hour Walk-In Center are the "poorest of the poor" in our community. The 24-Hour Walk-In Center provides meals (provided by churches), emergency clothing, emergency showers, emergency use of telephones, use of the Center as a mailing address, use of laundry facilities, storage for personal property, case management, "Rest and Recovery" beds for medically fragile or inebriated consumers, substance abuse referrals, mental health services, housing placement, and respite from the elements 24-hours per day, 7-days per week. All services are available on a drop-in basis. Needs that cannot be addressed on-site are referred to other service providers. There are no barriers to services in the 24-Hour Walk-In Center. The Center serves from 300 (summer) to 1000 (winter) persons per day (duplicated count).

NSO, as a primary provider for the chronically homeless population, is in favor of the MSHDA proposals to set aside tax credits as follows:

1. Thirty percent to be set aside to develop housing for homeless and/or special needs population
2. Ten percent of the units in all developments to be targeted to incomes at or below 30% of the area mean income for those who are homeless and/or have special needs.

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Detroit Medical Center

NSO is able to provide services to homeless individuals, but they will always be homeless until they are housed, and housing is only available if there are subsidies. MSHDA and the Michigan Department of Community Health have been instrumental in increasing housing opportunities for homeless people in Detroit, but the need still far outweighs the supply. These set-asides will help in that regard.

Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Bill Weld-Wallis", followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Bill Weld-Wallis
Chief Operating Officer

Cc: Sheilah Clay
LaNeice Jones
Christopher Parks
Ronald Riggs